

[p. 177a]

841 track of the periods are used but some account is kept of the phase of the moon and an approximate idea formed. The normal menstruation is regarded as lasting 3 or 4 days. Slight or excessive flows during the period are believed to be bad. No special garments are worn, but the ordinary underwear is carefully washed after the flow ends.

[834] Women should not have relations with men during the menstrual period, and most women do not resume relations with their husbands until they have bathed, although some do so as soon as menstruation ends. Violation of this rule is believed to be bad for the men and to cause them to contract a disease with ulcers.

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841 Women may prepare food for themselves and others, but they must not eat certain foods.

262 These include "cold" things, such as avocados or prickly pears. Beans, if eaten, must be consumed with quantities of onions. Rice, pork, and preserved chiles (because the liquid is very "cool") are also believed to be bad. Dried chiles may be eaten. *Aguardiente* is also avoided, although a little in coffee or orange-leaf tea is believed to be helpful. The majority, if possible, drink chocolate in the mornings even though they may not normally do so or may even dislike it. In connection with the concept of "coldness" it should be noted that this refers to the supposed effects on the person, not to the quality of the thing itself. Cold water, for example, may be consumed freely. Aside from sexual restrictions, men have no special rules to observe when their wives menstruate.

MARRIAGE AND SEX RELATIONSHIPS

581 Marriage is the normal state of the Cherán adult and unmarried persons are relatively rare, except among the aged. Although sexual inverts were reported, in every case they had married. One woman is known to be an invert and is called *toro-vaca*. As a girl she attempted to seduce other girls, and a woman told Rendón that in her childhood the individual in question once tried to drag her into a vacant lot, stopping her mouth with a *rebozo*, but she tore loose and screamed and was rescued by her father. Various charges were also made against the woman in court, but nothing was ever done.

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- 838 The individual in question was also said once to have lived with another woman who did the work in the household while the former acted like a man. It is also believed that she is a "man" during one month and a "woman" the next, the change being regulated by changes in the moon. During the month she is a "man" she is said to go through the streets at night, trying to entice girls to her house, or else she stands at the door of her house and offers presents to girls who will come in. At one time the woman married and had two children but later was widowed. That the individual is emotionally unstable is indicated by her claim to have once "died" and come to life again, after which she brought many people messages from their dead relatives whom she had encountered in the other world.
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No cases of men dressing as women or men who had homosexual relations were encountered, but there evidently are occasional instances. The only specific reports encountered were of subadolescent boys who showed a preference for doing women's work. One example cited was of a boy who washed dishes, swept, made tortillas, and did other housework. His voice was high-pitched and he refused to fight. Later, however, the boy's voice changed and he married.

- 548 Some prostitution exists in Cherán. There are several houses of assignation operated by elderly women who know the accessible women. Men go to these houses and the old woman then takes a message to some girl or woman. The younger women are often the daughters of older women who have taken this way of life, but sometimes the girls from other families will visit such houses clandestinely. Such girls become known among the unmarried men and usually have difficulty in marrying. Often they attempt to force boys to marry them by claiming to have been "stolen" by a boy and lodging complaints with the mayor, often abetted by their parents. If the girl's reputation is bad, the boy may be put in jail as a discouragement to boys who might be tempted to steal a girl without marrying her, but the boy will not be forced to marry.

The patrons of such houses are usually bachelors and older unmarried youths. Some whose wives are pregnant also visit such houses